

2008 Tribal Relations Training



Track 4: Education
Jan Lombardi, Joe Anderson,
Mike Jetty & Sue Tinsley



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Note Cards

- Ask your questions anonymously
- Everything you ever wanted to know about American Indians but were afraid to ask...



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Article X of the Montana Constitution

Education and Public Lands

Section 1

(1) It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state.

(2) The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.



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Indian Education for All (1999)

MCA 20-1-501

Every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner.



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Indian Education For All

MCA 20-1-501

Every educational agency and all educational personnel will work cooperatively with Montana tribes ... when providing instruction and implementing an educational goal. ...



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A “Quality Education” includes IEFA

Mont. Code Ann. sec. 20-9-309

A "basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools" means:

- (c) educational programs to implement the provisions of Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution and Title 20, chapter 1, part 5, through development of curricula designed to integrate the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians into the curricula, with particular emphasis on Montana Indians



Government-to-Government efforts by OPI:

OPI State Superintendent McCulloch's Government-to-Government Proclamation

...the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) shall continue to work with the seven Tribal Education Departments, the Governor, universities, tribal colleges and local school districts in developing and promoting access to and excellence in American Indian education throughout Montana. I recognize the government-to-government relationship that exists between the Tribal Nations and the State of Montana. As an elected executive of this state, I shall honor that relationship.



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Government-to-Government efforts by OPI:

- Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education (MACIE)

Was established by the Office of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education to act in an advisory role to them in matters affecting the education of Indian students in Montana.

MACIE advocates for greater cooperation among tribal, state and federal organizations, institutions, groups and agencies for the express purpose of promoting high-quality education and equal educational opportunity for Montana's Indian students.



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Government-to-Government efforts by OPI:

MACIE Membership

- The composition of the council shall consist of members who are representative of Indian education in the state of Montana. The membership shall be selected in consultation with Indian education organizations, tribes and schools. Each reservation (including Little Shell) shall be invited to have one representative who is nominated by the Tribal Council.



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Comments from Montana Educators

Elementary school teacher, Bozeman

- “I love learning this stuff along with my students. I see Montana in a whole new way. And I’m from here! I only wish we had had this emphasis on Indian Education when I was growing up.”



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Comments from Montana Educators

Indian Education ‘Coach,’ Great Falls

- “Indian Education For All is not about blaming people, or making them feel guilty. It’s about teaching us all to include each other when we think about the world, and about our place in it. It’s about getting rid of the biases that we’ve all inherited, and looking at each other as fellow human beings, and not as a collection of stereotypes. And students get it. They really get it.”



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Comments from Montana Educators

High school teacher, Central Montana

- “This stuff – this Indian Ed stuff – is so cool. Because, at the end of the day, it’s not just about Indians. It’s about teaching kids to look at everybody around them as fellow human beings. And that carries over into every academic area, and every part of life.”



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Comments from Montana Educators

Middle school principal, western Montana

- “I think Indian Education for All is the best thing to come along in a long, long time. Lots of teachers at our school are really excited about it. Because, it’s not like this is stuff we weren’t doing at all, or didn’t know about. But it puts a kind of emphasis on Indian issues, Indian history, Indian worldview, whatever. And it opens people’s eyes. Not just kids, teachers too.”



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Comments from Montana Educators

Librarian, Western Montana

- “I think this is the greatest stuff ever. The Indian Education For All stuff. Seriously. And as a librarian, I feel I have an important role in this. Look at all the books out there! All the skewed history! Most of us are not even aware how biased so many of our text books are. Sometimes it’s subtle. But it’s important to root it out. And I must say, I was aware of it before, but I’m really aware of it now.”



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Essential Understandings Regarding Montana's American Indians

In the year 1999, OPI brought together representatives from all the tribes in Montana and created 7 Essential Understandings. These are some of the major issues all tribes have in common. They form the basis for all of our curriculum efforts and initiatives.



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The Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana's American Indian Tribes

“These teaching principles are not called the seven Essential Facts or Essential Guidelines. They are Understandings, a way of knowing that goes beyond surface knowledge; a way of knowing that requires a deeper sense of the complexity of human interaction...”

*- Dr. Richard Sims
Director, MHS*



Essential Understanding #1

- There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?

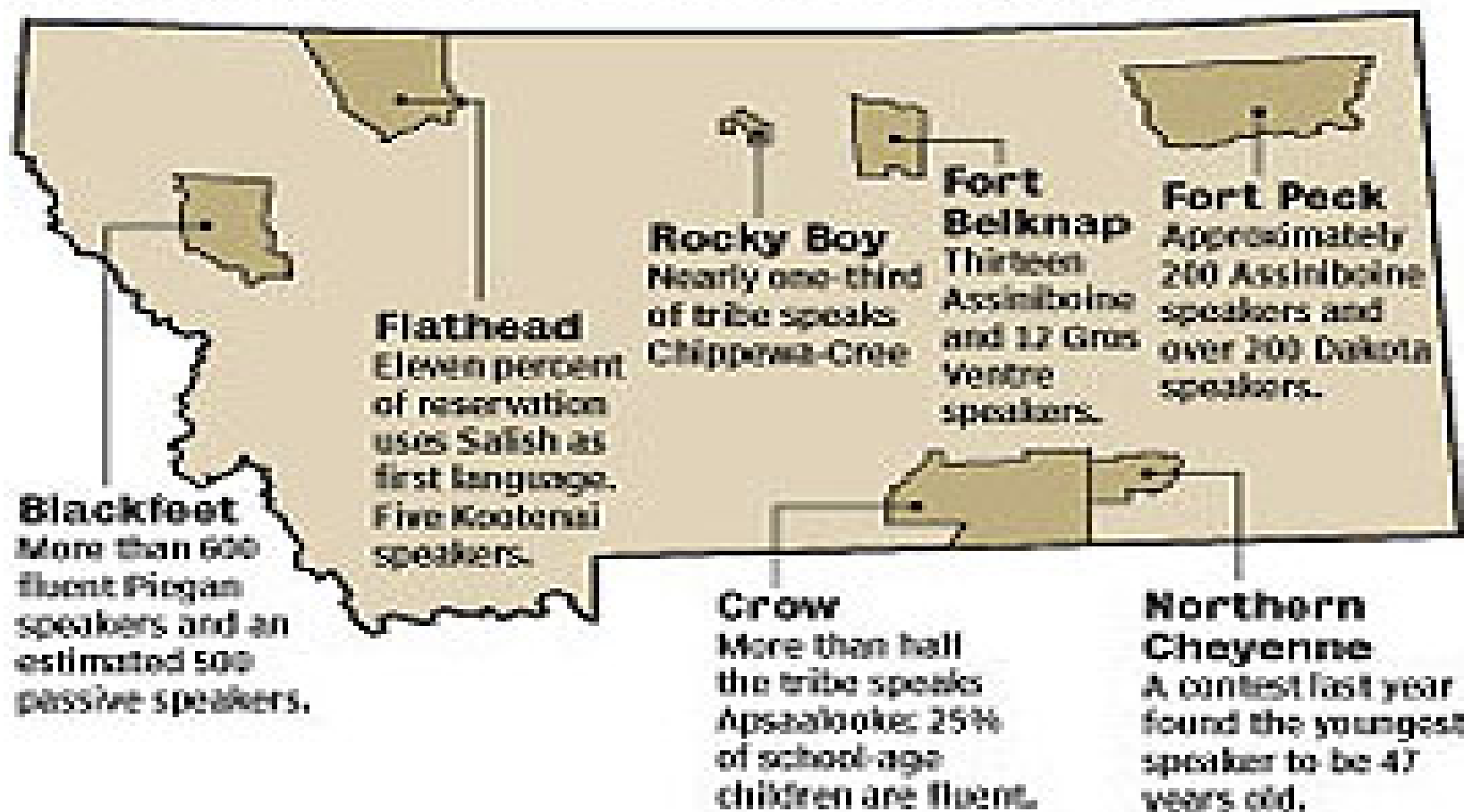


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Native tongues going silent?

The actual number of fluent speakers of Montana's 11 native languages is difficult to determine, but the Learning Lodge Institute found these statistics for Montana's tribal languages.



Essential Understanding #2

- There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by many entities, organizations and people. There is a continuum of Indian identity ranging from assimilated to traditional and is unique to each individual. There is no generic Indian.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?



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Essential Understanding #3

- The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Additionally, each tribe has their own oral history beginning with their origin that is as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?



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Essential Understanding #4

- Reservations are land that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties and was not “given” to them.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?



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Essential Understanding #5

- There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have impacted Indian people and shape who they are today. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?



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Essential Understanding #6

- History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tell us.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?



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Issues To Consider...

“We must temper our national pride with critical self knowledge...”

History through red eyes offers our children a deeper understanding than comes from encountering the past as a story of inevitable triumph by the good guys.”

- (Loewen, 1996 – Lies My Teacher Told Me)



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Essential Understanding #7

- Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers separated and independent from the federal and state governments. However, the extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe.

What does this mean?

Does it apply to my job/work with state govt.?



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Accreditation Standards

10.55.803 Learner Access

(2) In developing curricula in all program areas, the board of trustees shall consider ways to:

(h) provide books and materials which reflect authentic historical and contemporary portrayals of American Indians;



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Accreditation Standards

10.55.701 The Board Of Trustees (3) Each school district shall have in writing and available to staff and public: (m) a policy that incorporates the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians that is aligned with district educational goals;

Does your agency have a policy statement regarding American Indians?



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OPI Website

www.opi.mt.gov

Choose Indian Education from the pull down menu
to view resources



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Cultural Protocols

- **Protocol When Working With Tribes** (adapted from document that can found in original form on the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council website at: <http://www.mniac.org>)
- Understand the unique relationship between American Indians and the United States government. It is a political relationship – not race based.
- The history of this unique relationship is relevant and important to working with a Tribe.
- There are over 500 federally recognized Tribes – each with its own history, culture, and language.
- Do not assume one Tribe or one leader speaks for all. Take the time to find the key players.
- Those you consult with might not be able to answer questions immediately. They may need to think about it and consult with others.



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Cultural Protocols

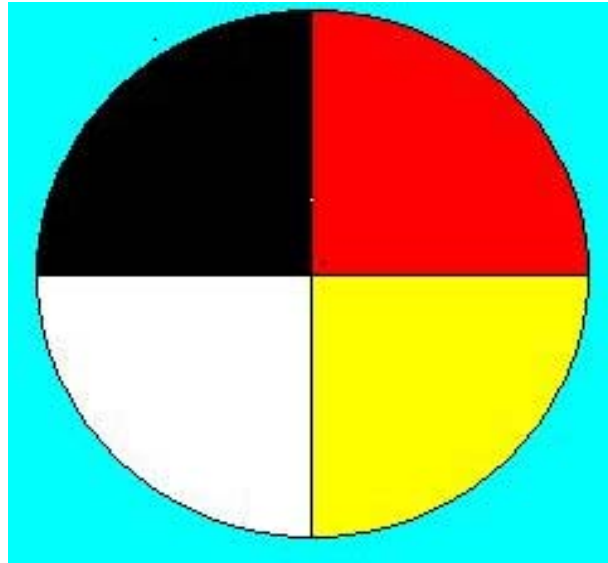
- American Indians object to being ‘consulted’ or ‘studied’ by people who have little intention of doing anything in response to their concerns. Be prepared to negotiate, to find ways to accommodate the Tribe’s concerns. Be prepared to respond with reasons why the advice may or may not be followed.
- Meetings with Tribal council officials and Tribal program staff should, if possible, be conducted between the same levels of officials.
- Formal notices or invitations should be addressed to the Tribal Chairperson and/or the appropriate Council Representative or Committee, with the respective Tribal program Director copied in on the letter.
- Understand that there are different ways of communication. During negotiations, prepare to discuss all aspects of an issue at hand simultaneously rather than sequentially.
- If possible, arrange meetings with refreshments and/or a meal. This is a cultural characteristic that is still strong in Indian country.



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E Pluribus Unum

"From out of many...one"



"We are all related"

Mitakuye Oyasin

